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# WHY INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN "TECHNICAL DECISIONS"

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# THE RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- **Improved quality of decisions by:**
  - **Anticipating public concerns and attitudes**
  - **Better problem definition**
  - **Full consideration of alternatives**
  - **Better understanding of why things “are the way they are”**

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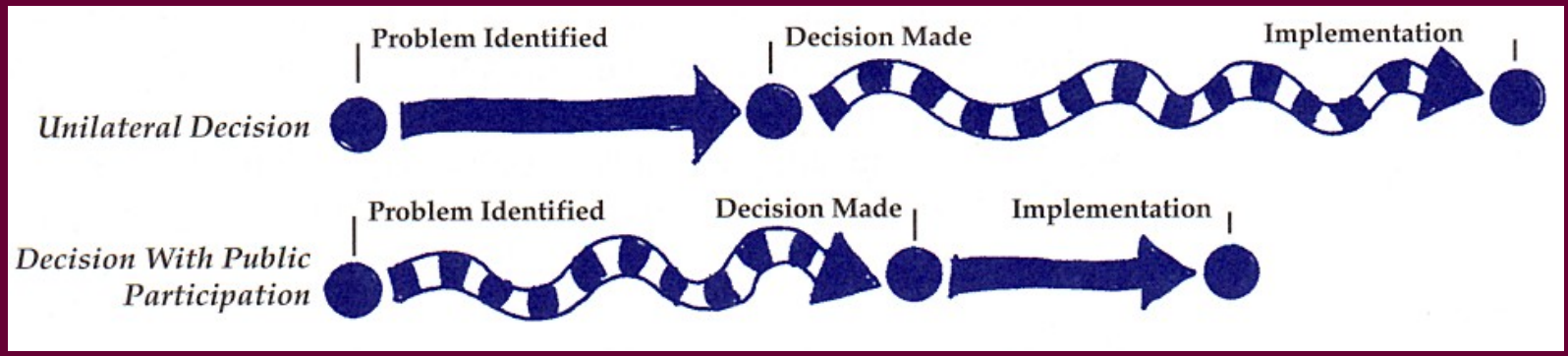
# THE RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - Continued

- **Minimizing cost and delay**



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# THE RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - Continued

- Increased ease of implementation
- Enhances sustainability of implemented programs
- Avoiding "worst-case" confrontations
- Reduced perception of risk
- Developing civil society – putting the "civil" back in civil engineering

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# THE RATIONALE FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - Continued

- Many decisions people think of as technical decisions are actually choices between competing “values”
- “Values choices” involve having to choose between two things society thinks of as “good”

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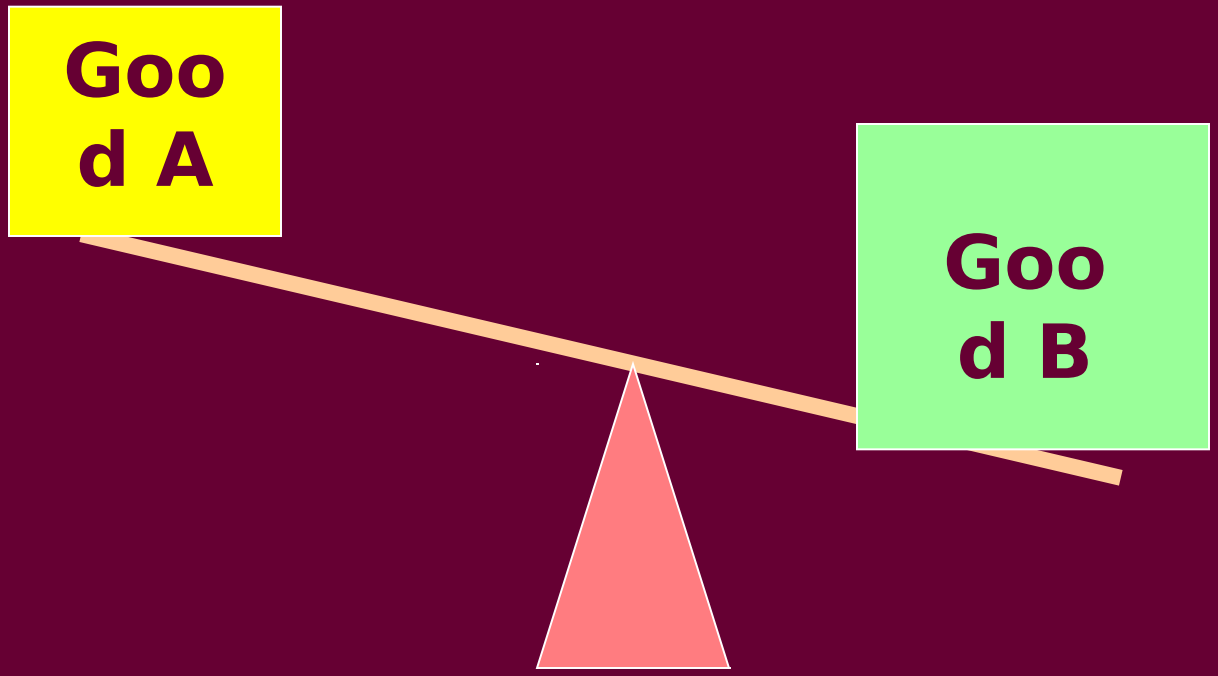
# "VALUING" MEANS DECIDING WHICH "GOOD" IS MORE IMPORTANT



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# VALUES LINE-UP

- It's 2005, and there is now scientific consensus that second-hand smoking is a significant cause of cancer
- You are all the staff of a regulatory agency that has to act once it is known that a substance causes cancer

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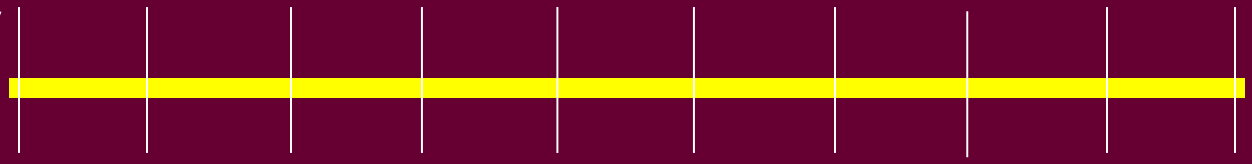
# WHERE DO YOU STAND?

**Smoking is my God-given right**



**Smoking in the presence of other people is a crime**

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# DEBRIEFING THE EXERCISE

- The instructions made clear that the science was conclusive: secondary smoke causes cancer.
- There wasn’t a disagreement on a technical basis, the disagreement was about values.

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# TWO VALUES CONTINUA

**PERSONAL FREEDOM**

**PUBLIC WELFARE**

**GOVERNMENT IS BEST THAT GOVERNS LEAST**

**GOVERNMENT IS THE PROTECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY**

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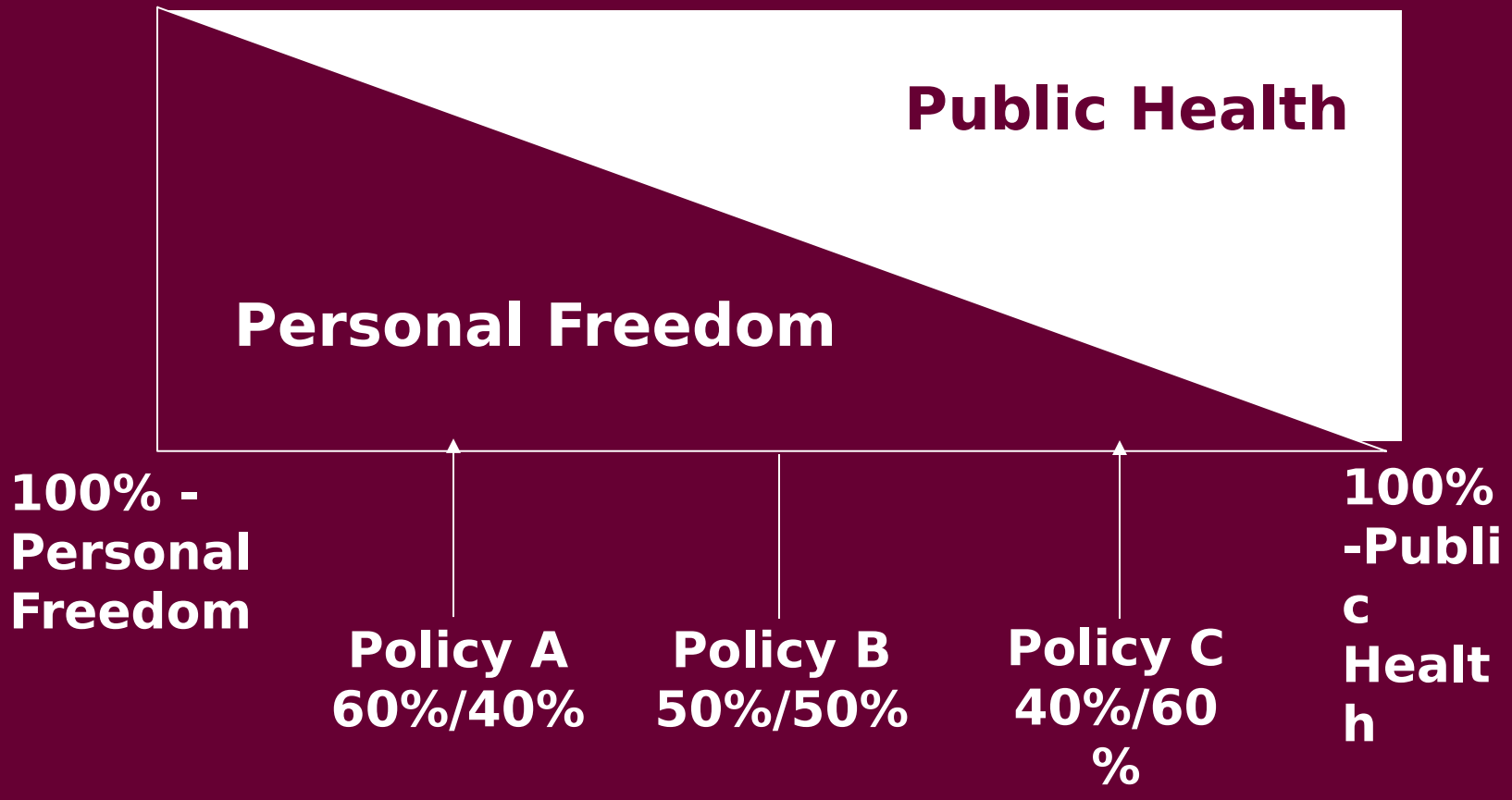
# Policies are balance points along a continuum between two “goods.”



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# A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL VALUES MATRIX

**WHAT IS THE PUBLIC WELFARE?**

| ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM | | GOVERNMENT ACTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Environmental protection is most important - achieved by individual/private action | Environmental protection is most important – best achieved by a mix of individual action and government action | Environmental protection is most important – best achieved by government action |
| | Environment and economics equally important – best achieved through individual initiative | Environment and economics equally important – but it requires both individual initiative and government action | Environment and economics equally important – but best achieved by government action |
| | Economic development is most important – best achieved by individual/ private action | Economic development is most important – best achieved by a mix of individual action and government action | Economic development is most important – best achieved by government |

**HOW IT IS BEST ACHEIVED**

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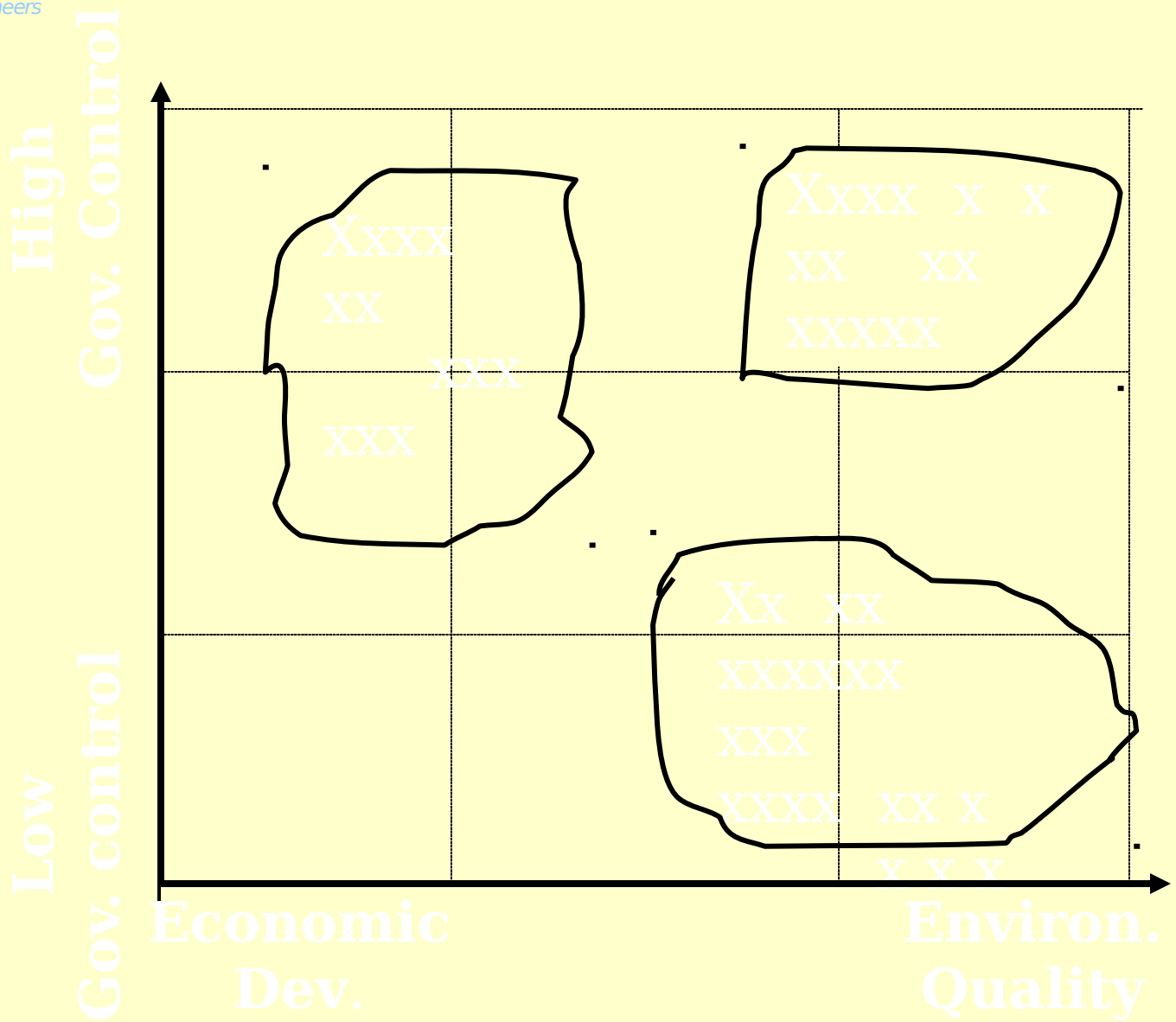
# Developing Value Based Alternatives



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# SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT VALUES

- When there are big values differences, the other side will always appear “over-emotional” and “irrational”
- People of similar point of view will cluster together

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# SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT VALUES - Continued

- Agencies develop homogenous values
- People with the same values move ahead
- Different agencies have different values

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# CHARACTERISTICS OF "TECHNICAL" DECISIONS

- Involve one value dimension, e.g. water quality
- Governed by professional standards
- In theory, two technical people should come up with comparable answers

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# WHY INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN "TECHNICAL DECISIONS?

**Most larger decisions made by agencies aren't really technical decisions, but values choices, informed by technical information**

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# WHY VALUE CHOICES NEED A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

- Stakeholders view decisions about values as “political”
- Technical training doesn’t make us more qualified than others to decide what’s good for society

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# WHY VALUE CHOICES NEED A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS - continued

- Agencies still have to make decisions that involve values choices; but values choices are prime candidates for participation

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# WHY VALUE CHOICES NEED A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

**continued**

- **When agencies are confused about the difference between technical and values choices, stakeholders often begin to second-guess the agency technically**

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# Old Model

Stand off:

Value Free:

Objective scientist/obse

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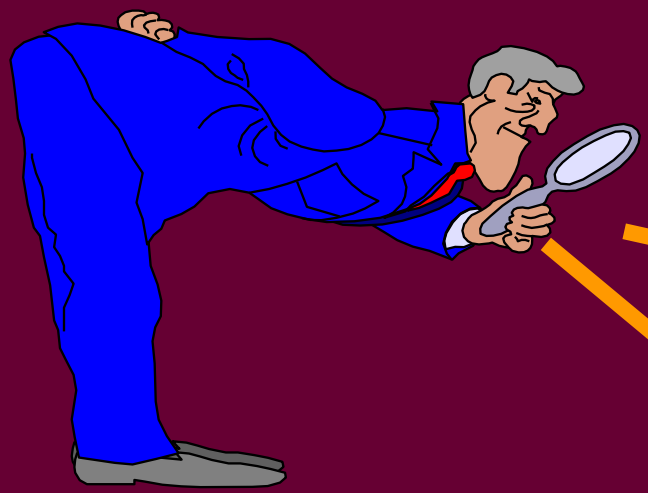

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# New Model

## We interact with that which we observe and change it as it changes us in the process

**Water management (and water reform) is ALWAYS political…..**

Ancient Chinese Characters describing water management

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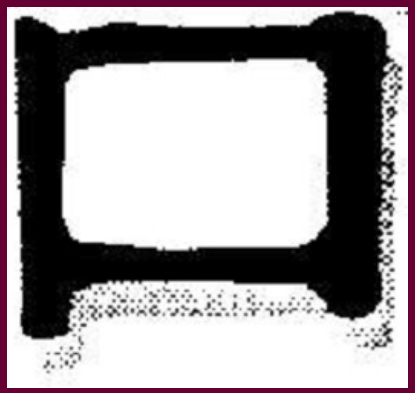

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river + dike = Politic al

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# CLASS EXERCISE

- Complete instructions are on page
- The instructor will assign you to a team
- In your team, formulate a plan in accordance with the instructions given to your team
- Do not read the instructions given to the other teams

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The Basic Principles
1. Focus on the situation, issue, or behavior, not on the person.
2. Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others.
3. Maintain constructive relationships.
4. Take initiative to make things better.
5. Lead by example.
Group 1

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# OVERNIGHT ASSIGNMENT

- **Once you are assigned to a team, make assignments to ensure all cases are read overnight, with key points identified for a presentation**
- **You will have an hour in the morning for your team to prepare a 10-minute presentation for the Chief**